

Message Text

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R 110430Z FEB 75

FM AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4186

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

UNCLAS DHAHRAN 0198

BECK FOR SOCKS,S.A.D.; AND HALE, CAGNE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, SA

SUBJECT: U.S. RAILWAY MISSION

REF: STATE 009760

1. FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS DHAHRAN WITH MANAGER SAUDI RAILWAY BOARD AND OTHER SOURCES, EVIDENT IMMEDIATE OR SHORT-TERM BUSINESS POTENTIAL SAUDI ARABIA FOR MISSION PROBABLY SLIM. AT WORKING LEVEL SAG, THERE IS MUCH UNCERTAINTY REGARDING ADVISABILITY SUBSTANTIAL NEUMENVESTMENT RAILWAYS AND FUTURE COURSE WILL BE DETERMINED BY ARTHUR LITTLE STUDY STILL IN EARLY STAGE. IN VIEW THIS SITUATION, THERE IS RELATIVELY LITTLE PRIVATE SECTOR INTEREST IN MEETING WITH RAILWAY MISSION. WILL ATTEMPT DETERMINE DURING VISIT RIYADH WHETHER SOME MAJOR RAILWAY DECISIONS, SUCH AS SUPPORT FOR REOPENING HEJAZ RAILWAY, MAY BE IN WORKS FOR POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC REASONS. MISSION VISIT TO RIYADH WILL BE USEFUL ANY EVENT AS SAUDI RAILWAY MANAGER HAS ARRANGED HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS THERE POTENTIAL VALUE MISSION MEMBERS.

2. IN VIEW LIMITED PRIVATE SECTOR INTEREST IN MEETING MISSION, RECOMMEND SHORTENING SAUDI VISIT BY BY-PASSING JIDDA. EMBASSY BRIEFING CAN BE GIVEN IN RIYADH. BELIEVE CANCELLED MISSION TIME HERE COULD BE BETTER USED BY UNOFFICIAL MISSION STOPOVER JORDAN ENROUTE DAMASCUS. THIS WOULD ALSO AVOID AWKWARD AND UNPRODUCTIVE ARRIVAL TIME PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED

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FOR DAMASCUS. RECOMMEND ALSO EXTENDING MISSION STAY DAMASCUS

ONE ADDITIONAL DAY MARCH 11 TO PERMIT ADEQUATE ATTENTION THAT MARKET. RATIONALE AND PROPOSED MECHANICS JORDAN VISIT, BROACHED TENTATIVELY TO EMBASSY AMMAN, OUTLINED SEPTTEL BECK BRADFORD ACTION AMMAN AND WASHINGTON.

3. WOULD HAVE PREFERRED DISCUSSING THESE RECOMMENDATIONS BEFOREHAND BY TELEPHONE BUT STWESIDE CONNECTION FROM HERE VERY DIFFICULT AND IMPOSSIBLE CALL FROM RIYADH WHERE I WILL BE FOR NEXT THREE DAYS. REALIZE THAT PROPOSED STOPOVER AMMAN, IF DESIRED BY THAT POST AND CONCURRED IN BY WASHINGTON, WILL POSE SOME ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY CHANGELNVXAS WELL AS DISTORTING DATES GIVEN IN MISSION BORCHURE. HOWEVER, BELIEVE THESE PROBLEMS OUTWEIGHED BY IMPROVED AND MORE MEANINGFUL MISSION ITINERARY IN TERMS OF POTENTIAL BUSINESS CONTENT. EXPENDITURES COMMITTED SO FAR WILL BELOW ANTICIPATED LEVELS, PARTICULARLY IN SAUDI AQOLX AND TRUST THAT SUFFICIENT ALLOCATION FOR JORDAN STOP COULD BE TRANSFERRED FROM MISSION ALLOCATION FOR SAUDI ARABIA. WILL PHONE SOCKS ON MY ARRIVAL IN BEIRUT EVENING FEBRUARY 12 OR FOLLOWING DAY TO LEARN COMMERCE POSITION IN LIGHT OF REPLIES FROM AMMAN AND DAMASCUS. BAHTI

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